

**The City of Fresno**  
**Draft Master Environmental Impact Report**  
**for the 2025 Fresno General Plan**  
**EIR No. 10130**  
**SCH Log No. 2001071097**

**Chapter III – Project Description**

**A. PURPOSE OF THE MASTER EIR**

This Master Environmental Impact Report provides an analysis of the potential environmental effects associated with a comprehensive update to the City's General Plan. The 2025 Fresno General Plan provides policies and land use designations to accommodate an expansion of Fresno's population from approximately 482,000 persons to approximately 790,000 persons. The 2025 Fresno General Plan encompasses approximately 162 square miles (see Figure III-1) along State Highway 99, approximately 170 miles south of Sacramento and 110 miles north of Bakersfield.

The current General Plan (in effect as of May 1, 2002) was originally adopted in 1984. The Plan has been amended several times since then. Residential buildout of the current General Plan would result in a city of approximately 671,000 people. Sections III-C and III-D in this Chapter present some of the significant changes and issues to be addressed in the Draft 2025 Fresno General Plan as compared to the 1984 Fresno General Plan currently in effect.

The City has elected to utilize the Master Environmental Impact Report process as presented in Article 4.5 of the Public Resources Code. The City supports the legislative intent of this process, namely "that the environmental review of subsequent projects be substantially reduced to the extent that the project impacts have been reviewed and appropriate mitigation measures are set forth in a certified master environmental impact report" (Section 21156, Public Resources Code).

**B. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

Section 15124(b) of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that "a clearly written statement of objectives will help the lead agency develop a reasonable range of alternatives to evaluate in the EIR and will aid decision makers in preparing findings or a statement of overriding considerations, as necessary."

Following are key objectives of the 2025 Fresno General Plan as they relate to this Master Environmental Impact Report:

1. Enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Fresno and plan for the projected population within the moderately expanded Fresno urban boundary in a manner which will respect physical, environmental, fiscal, economic, and social issues.
2. Pursue coordinated regional planning with Fresno and Madera Counties and the City of Clovis.
3. Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods, the downtown, and historical resources.
4. Promote a partnership among citizens, industry, and government, which fosters well-planned and efficiently processed development.
5. Support the Growth Alternatives Alliance "Landscape of Choice-Principles and Strategies" as based upon the Ahwahnee Group Principles, both of which are included in the Appendix of the 2025 Fresno General Plan.
6. Coordinate land uses and circulation systems to promote a viable and integrated multi-modal transportation network.
7. Manage growth to balance Fresno's urban form while providing an adequate public service delivery system, which is fairly and equitably financed.

8. Provide opportunity for a variety of affordable housing throughout the Metropolitan Area.
9. Provide activity centers and intensity corridors within plan areas to create a mix of land uses and amenities to foster community identity and reduce travel.
10. Provide quality open space, park and recreational facilities and programs to support the projected population.
11. Protect, preserve, and enhance significant biological, archaeological, and paleontological resources and critical natural resources, including, but not limited to, air, water, agricultural soils, minerals, plants, and wildlife resources.
12. Develop urban design strategies to improve Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function.
13. Plan for a healthy business and diversified employment environment, and provide adequate timely services to ensure that Fresno is competitive in the marketplace.
14. Protect and improve public health and safety.
15. Recognize, respect, and plan for Fresno's cultural, social, and ethnic diversity.
16. Work cooperatively with the local agricultural industry to conserve prime farmland and respect its importance as Fresno County's base economic resource.
17. Encourage fiscal and local agency planning policies that will assist in the annexation of unincorporated county islands within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence.

### **C. GENERAL PLAN LAND USE CHANGES**

This MEIR addresses the physical impacts anticipated from key changes in land uses proposed in the 2025 Fresno General Plan. Following are the key land use changes.

1. A 22-square mile expansion of the planned urban boundary and sphere of influence to accommodate approximately 65,000 people (8.2% of the projected year 2025 population). This geographic expansion (including the North Growth Area and the Southeast Growth Area) is graphically portrayed in Figure III-1.
2. Increased urban land use density and intensity to accommodate the projected year 2025 population of 790,000 people and related employment growth. This information is presented in the Land Use and Circulation Element map for the 2025 Fresno General Plan.
3. Corresponding amendments to all State-mandated General Plan elements, including significant revisions to the land use and circulation map and a comprehensive update of the Housing Element; corresponding amendments to all community plans, including the Edison, Central Area, Roosevelt, Fresno High-Roeding, McLane, Bullard, Hoover, and Woodward plans; necessary amendments to the Fresno Yosemite International Airport Environs and Specific Plan, Master Parks Plan, and Master Trails Manual; and initiation and adoption of the West Area Community Plan.

**D. GENERAL PLAN POLICY CHANGES**

This MEIR addresses the physical impacts anticipated from key changes in the policies proposed in the 2025 Fresno General Plan. Following are the key policy changes:

1. Increased emphasis on plan implementation programs and regional cooperation in land use and facility planning, especially as related to the managed urban growth of the cities of Fresno and Clovis and the acknowledgment by the County that planned expansions are appropriate and will be facilitated by adopted County policies. Specific policies proposed in the 2025 Fresno General Plan are presented in Table III-1.
2. Increased emphasis on efforts to enhance and revitalize established neighborhoods, commercial areas, and the traditional downtown, including achievement of specific urban core enhancement performance measures. Specific policies proposed in the 2025 Fresno General Plan are presented in Table III-2.
3. Establishment of an urban form concept consisting of activity centers and linear corridors that accommodate higher intensity and mixed-use developments. This concept is presented as a 2025 Fresno General Plan Policy in Table III-3.

**E. PRESENTATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

Three of the alternatives presented in this section are established to provide a “reasonable range of alternatives” to the 2025 Fresno General Plan, as required by Section 15126.6 of the CEQA Guidelines. A fourth alternative consists of the proposed project, but with several private requests for alternative land use plan designations referred to as plan modifications. At the time that the 2025 Fresno General Plan was initiated for formal consideration, the City Council allowed property owners and other interested parties the opportunity to submit alternative proposals for land uses, policies or other measures to be considered together with the proposed project or preferred alternative. In Chapter IX of the MEIR, impacts of the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan are compared with the four alternatives. Brief descriptions of the four alternatives including diagrams of corresponding population distributions are provided below.

1. Alternative 1 – No Project (See Figure III-2)

This Alternative represents the No Project Alternative, as described in Section 15126.6 (e) of the CEQA Guidelines. The No Project Alternative represents the City’s General Plan that was in effect on January 1, 2002.

The purpose of describing and analyzing a No Project Alternative is to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the 2025 Fresno General Plan with the impacts of continued development under the present General Plan. Therefore, the environmental analysis of the No Project Alternative is presented as baseline information throughout this MEIR under Section 1 (d), “Existing Regulatory Policies Applying to the Study Area,” for each environmental topic presented in Chapter V. The population holding capacity of Alternative 1 is 671,000, which is less than the adopted regional growth forecast for the year 2025.

2. Alternative 2 – Intensified Development within Present General Plan Boundaries (see Figure III-3).

This Alternative assumes approximately the same population holding capacity (eg., 790,000) as the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan, but it concentrates that population within the General Plan boundaries in effect as of January 2002.

The population holding capacity of this Alternative closely corresponds to the adopted regional growth forecast for Fresno for 2025.

3. Alternative 3 – Reduced Intensity General Plan (see Figure III-4)

This Alternative is environmentally superior to the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan in that certain significant environmental effects are reduced. The boundaries of this Alternative are the same as in the 2025 Fresno General Plan, but the population holding capacity is reduced to approximately 542,590.

This reduced holding capacity was derived primarily from an evaluation of projected traffic congestion from the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan. Evaluating those street links in the 2025 Fresno General Plan that are projected to operate at a congested level of service, City staff derived a projected land use pattern that was less intense than the pattern presented in the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan. Therefore, it is expected that the projected traffic congestion levels under Alternative 3 would be improved, compared to levels presented in the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan.

4. Alternative 4 – Modifications to the Proposed Project (See Figure III-5, which consists of four sheets)

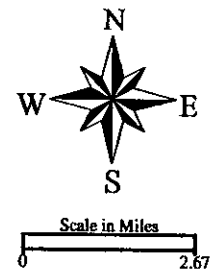
This alternative consists of the proposed 2025 Fresno General Plan with three major land use plan modifications filed by representatives of the affected properties which are described in Appendix C of the plan text. Modification No. 1 (Figure III-5, Sheet 2 of 4) relates to approximately 23.6 acres of land consisting of two parcels located along the west side of North Willow Avenue to the north and south of East Alluvial Avenue. Both parcels are designated for medium density residential use (4.99 to 10.37 dwelling units per acre) by the 2025 Fresno General Plan but are proposed to be designated for medium high density residential use (10.38 to 18.15 dwelling units per acre) by the modification request.

Modification No. 2 (Figure III-5, Sheet 3 of 4) proposed that regional commercial use be designated for the approximately 75-acre property located between Freeway 99 and Golden State Boulevard and immediately north of the planned Grantland Avenue diagonal major street. The 2025 Fresno General Plan proposes to continue the light industrial planned use for this area consistent with the currently applicable adopted plans and policies.

Modification No. 3 (Figure III-5, Sheet 4 of 5) addresses an approximately 102-acre area located along the west side of North Clovis Avenue from the California Avenue alignment to approximately 200 feet south of the Church Avenue alignment. This proposal would maintain the medium low density residential (2.19 to 4.98 dwelling units per acre) planned use for approximately 50-acres of the subject area consistent with currently adopted plans and policies. The presently designated 9.32-acre commercial office use would be reduced to 2.7 acres while the 9.9 acres of neighborhood commercial use would be expanded to approximately 23 acres of commercial uses. Finally approximately 12.3 acres of the subject property would be designated for medium residential use and 7.5 acres designated for medium high density residential use.

FIGURE III - 1  
**EIR No. 10130**  
**Urban Boundary for the Proposed Project**  
**(2025 Fresno General Plan)**

COMMUNITY PLAN AREA	EXISTING POPULATION YR 2000	2025 FGP POPULATION CAPACITY
Bullard	86,540	118,200
Central Area	14,920	27,760
Edison	24,730	69,010
Fresno High-Roeding	57,820	60,760
Hoover	50,410	56,210
McLane	46,440	64,830
Roosevelt	115,850	154,880
West Area	37,130	111,050
Woodward Park	44,730	60,530
North Area	1,070	8,760
Southeast Area	2,440	57,960
Mixed-Use Intensification	-----	2,000
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>482,080</b>	<b>790,960</b>



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**LEGEND**

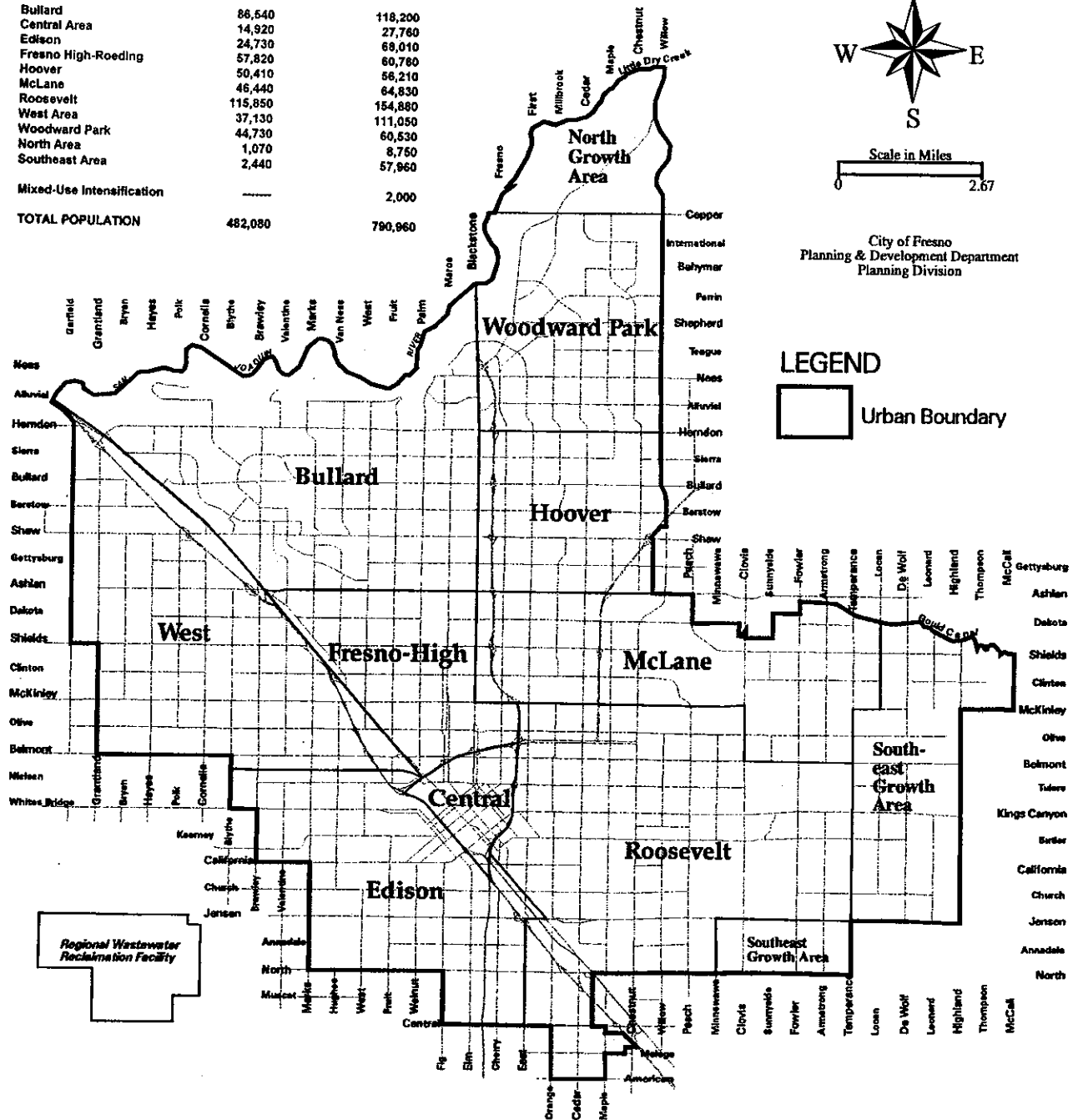
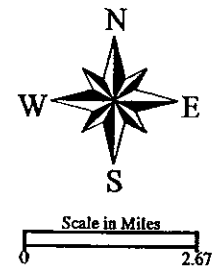


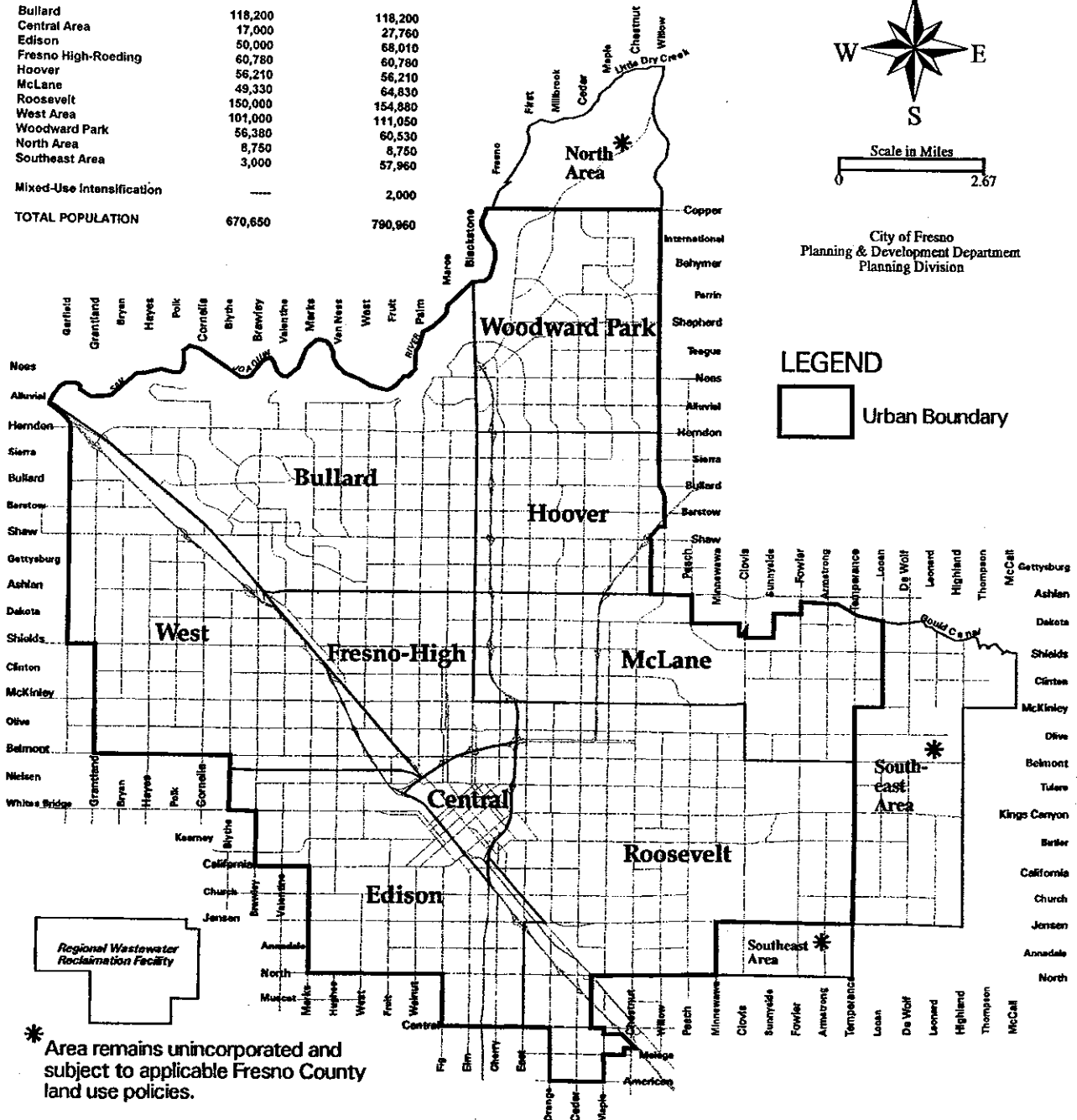
FIGURE III - 2  
**EIR No. 10130**  
**Urban Boundary for Alternative 1 - No Project**  
**(Existing General Plan as of January 1, 2002)**

COMMUNITY PLAN AREA	ALTERNATIVE 1 POPULATION CAPACITY	2025 FGP POPULATION CAPACITY
Bullard	118,200	118,200
Central Area	17,000	27,760
Edison	50,000	68,010
Fresno High-Roeding	60,780	60,780
Hoover	56,210	56,210
McLane	49,330	64,830
Roosevelt	150,000	154,880
West Area	101,000	111,050
Woodward Park	56,380	60,530
North Area	8,750	8,750
Southeast Area	3,000	57,960
Mixed-Use Intensification	---	2,000
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>670,650</b>	<b>790,960</b>



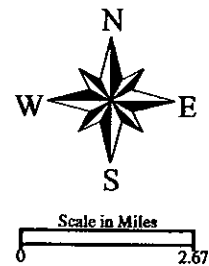
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**FIGURE III - 3**  
**EIR No. 10130**  
**Urban Boundary for Alternative 2**  
**Intensified Development Within**  
**Existing General Plan Boundaries**

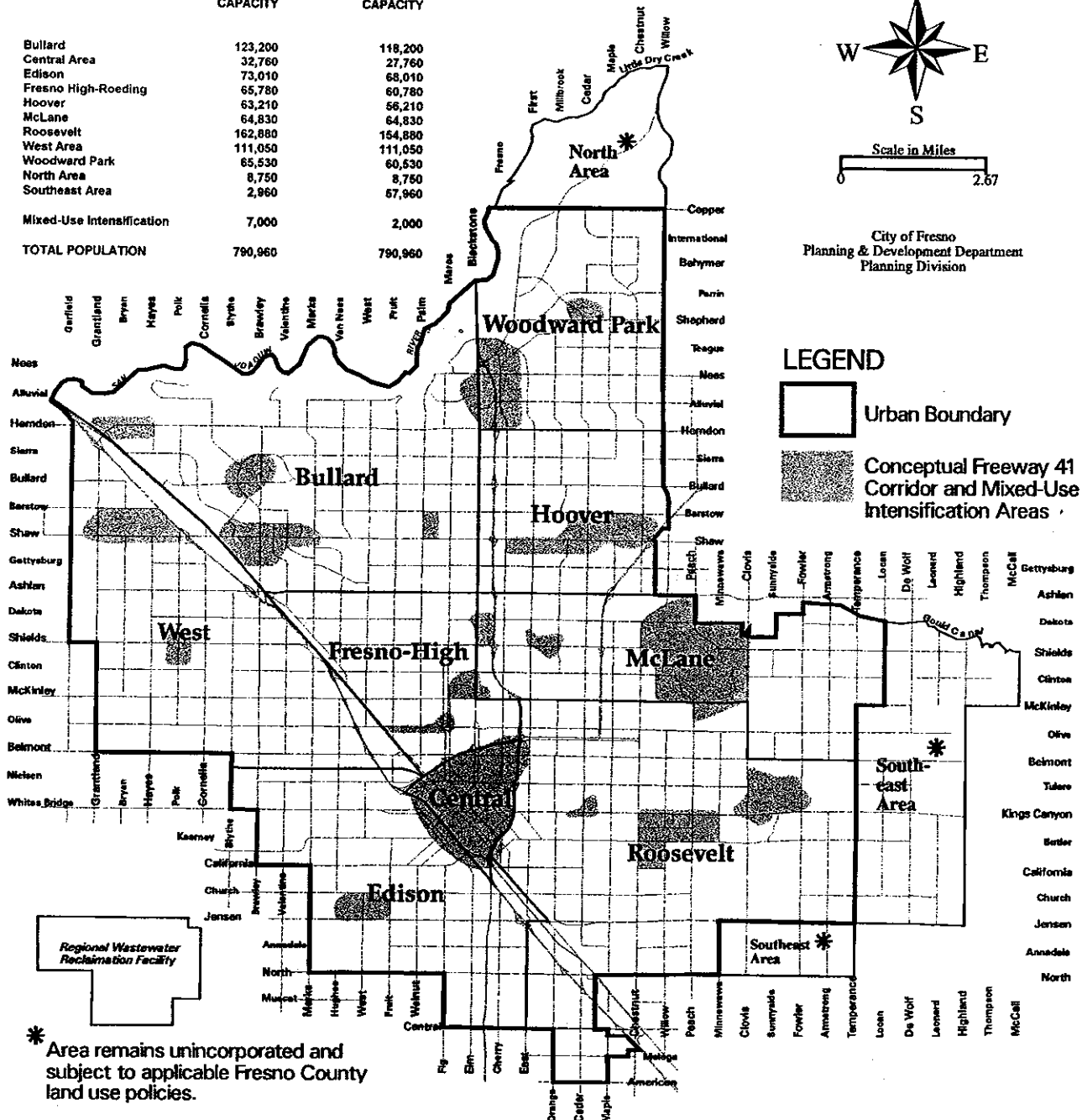
COMMUNITY PLAN AREA	ALTERNATIVE 2 POPULATION CAPACITY	2025 FGP POPULATION CAPACITY
Bullard	123,200	118,200
Central Area	32,760	27,760
Edison	73,010	68,010
Fresno High-Roeding	65,780	60,780
Hoover	63,210	58,210
McLane	64,830	64,830
Roosevelt	162,880	154,880
West Area	111,050	111,050
Woodward Park	65,530	60,530
North Area	8,750	8,750
Southeast Area	2,960	57,960
Mixed-Use Intensification	7,000	2,000
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>790,960</b>	<b>790,960</b>



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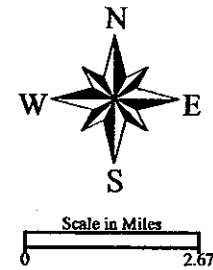
**LEGEND**

- Urban Boundary
- Conceptual Freeway 41 Corridor and Mixed-Use Intensification Areas



## FIGURE III - 4 EIR No. 10130 Urban Boundary for Alternative 3 Reduced Development Capacity

COMMUNITY PLAN AREA	ALTERNATIVE 3 POPULATION CAPACITY	2025 FGP POPULATION CAPACITY
Bullard	96,370	118,200
Central Area	18,840	27,760
Edison	33,930	68,010
Fresno High-Roeding	57,820	60,780
Hoover	52,390	56,210
McLane	49,330	64,830
Roosevelt	122,340	154,880
West Area	50,330	111,050
Woodward Park	56,380	60,530
North Area	4,000	8,750
Southeast Area	3,000	57,960
Mixed-Use Intensification	—	2,000
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>540,370</b>	<b>790,960</b>



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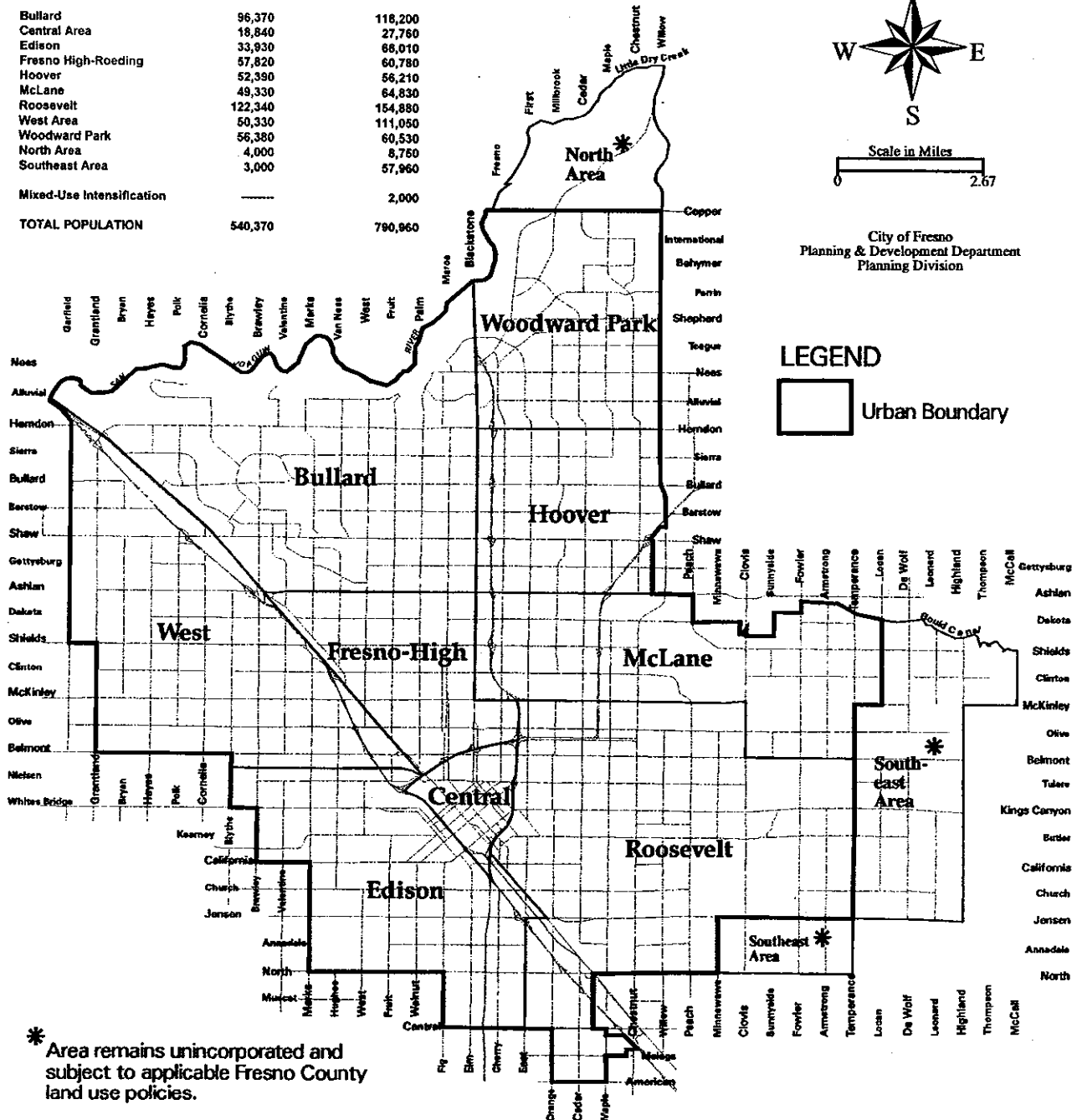
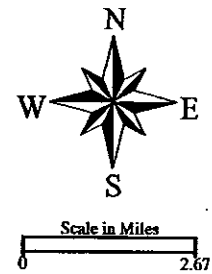


FIGURE III - 5 (Sheet 1 of 4)  
**EIR No. 10130**  
**Urban Boundary for Alternative 4**  
**Modifications to the Proposed Project**

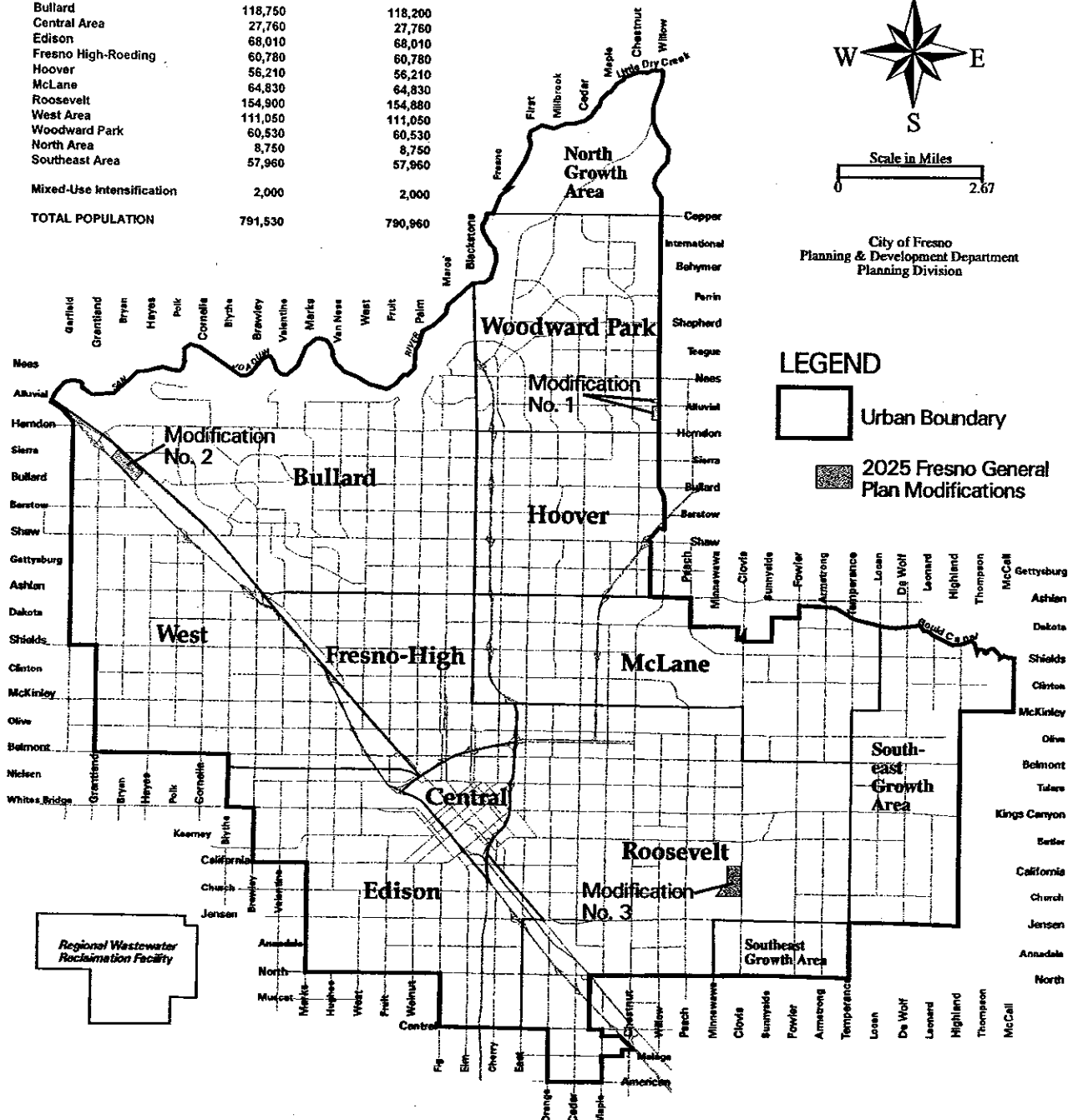
COMMUNITY PLAN AREA	ALTERNATIVE NO. 4 POPULATION YR 2000	2025 FGP POPULATION CAPACITY
Bullard	118,750	118,200
Central Area	27,760	27,760
Edison	68,010	68,010
Fresno High-Roeding	60,780	60,780
Hoover	56,210	56,210
McLane	64,830	64,830
Roosevelt	154,900	154,880
West Area	111,050	111,050
Woodward Park	60,530	60,530
North Area	8,750	8,750
Southeast Area	57,960	57,960
Mixed-Use Intensification	2,000	2,000
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>791,530</b>	<b>790,960</b>



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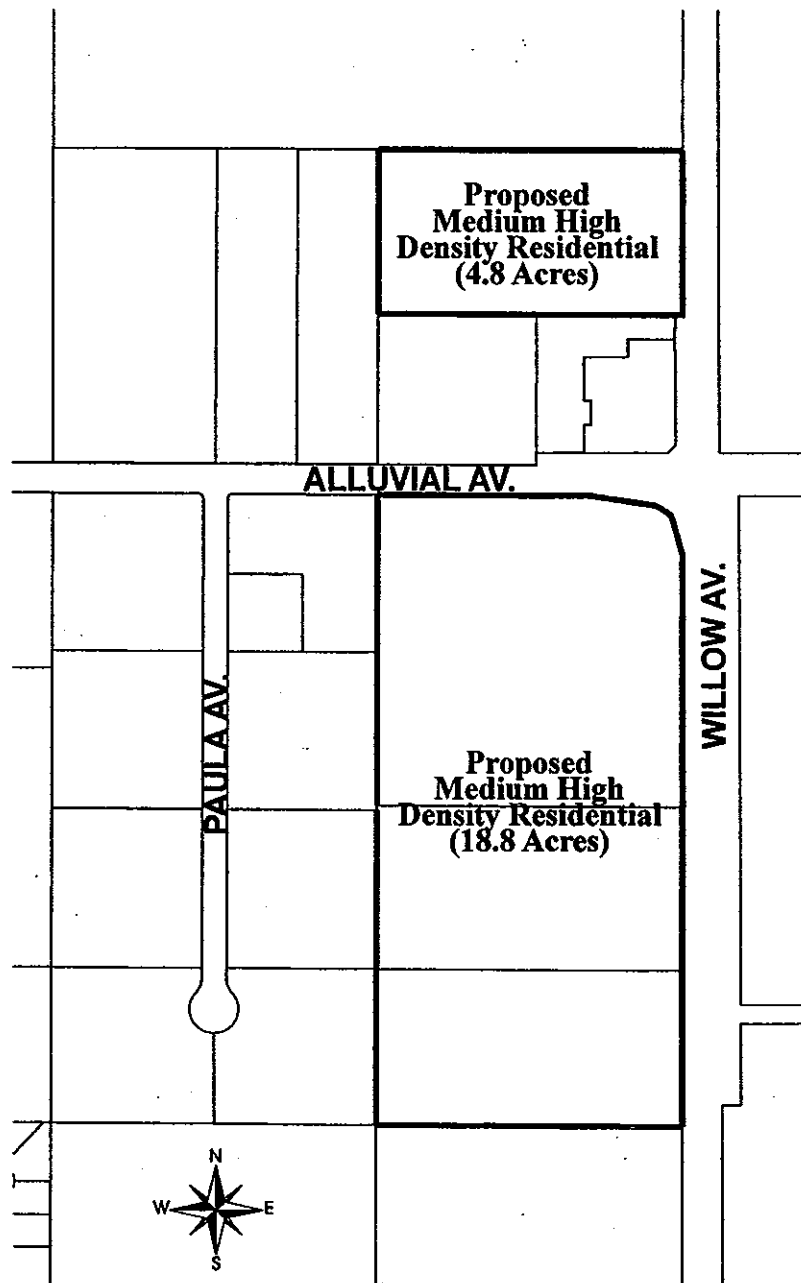
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- Urban Boundary
- 2025 Fresno General Plan Modifications



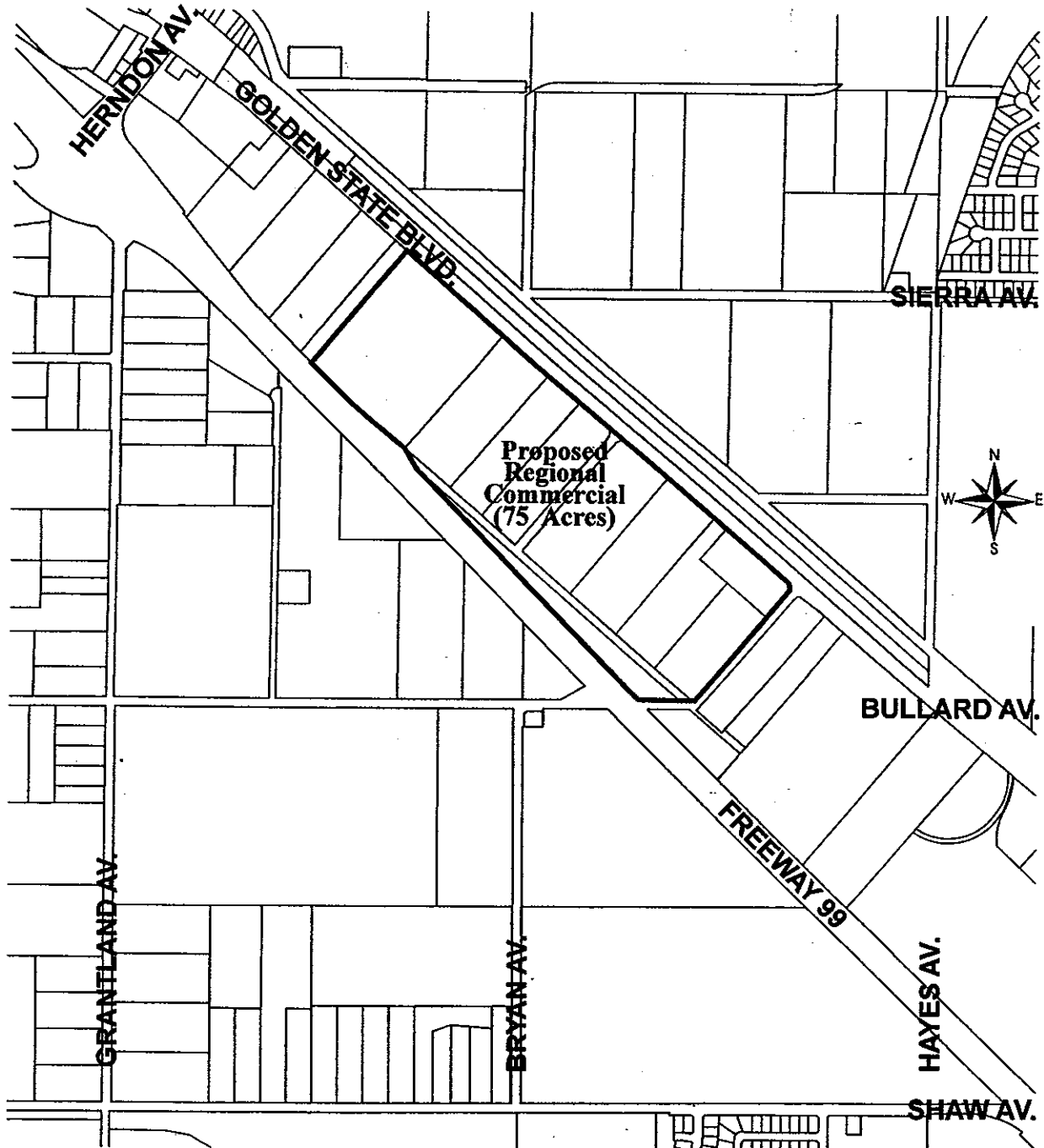
**FIGURE III-5: (SHEET 2 OF 4) ALTERNATIVE 4-MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

## **2025 Fresno General Plan Modification No. 1**



**FIGURE III-5: (SHEET 3 OF 4) ALTERNATIVE 4-  
MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

# **2025 Fresno General Plan Modification No. 2**



**FIGURE III-5: (SHEET 4 OF 4) ALTERNATIVE 4-MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

# **2025 Fresno General Plan Modification No. 3**

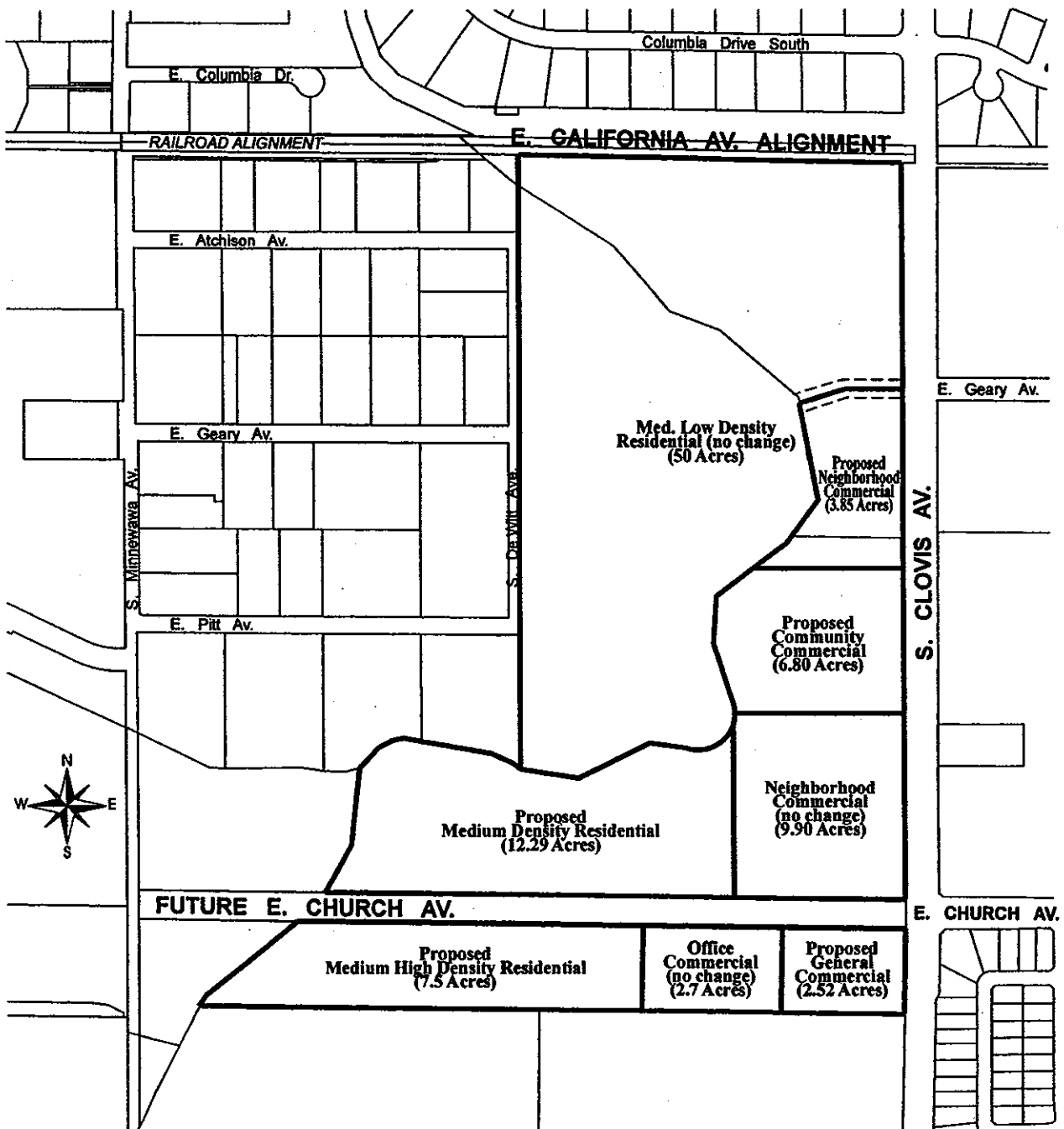


TABLE III-1: POLICIES PROPOSED BY THE 2025 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN TO INCREASE EMPHASIS ON REGIONAL COOPERATION IN LAND USE PLANNING

- B-1-a. Policy:** Pursue a coordinated Regional Land Use and Transportation Planning Program with the City of Clovis, Fresno and Madera Counties, and other cities which:
- ?? identifies areas suitable for development.
  - ?? directs urban development to incorporated cities.
  - ?? proposes programs to meet federal, state and local air quality requirements.
  - ?? identifies future regional facilities and services, including transportation corridors, water, and sewerage.
  - ?? applies public service impact fees equitably and uniformly throughout the metropolitan region.
  - ?? conserves agricultural land and prevents its premature conversion including requirements for an economic assessment, phasing plan, and criteria to prevent leapfrog development.
  - ?? opposes the creation of new rural residential lots within the identified sphere of influence of the City.
- B-1-d. Policy:** Oppose development by neighboring jurisdictions which compromises the integrity and implementation of the 2025 Fresno General Plan.
- B-1-e. Policy:** Continue to support the 1983 Joint Planning Resolution with the City of Clovis and Fresno County. This effort will include updating the existing resolution as necessary.
- B-1-f. Policy:** In cooperation with Fresno County and the City of Clovis, adopt a sphere of influence which includes all territory in which the City has a legitimate interest in future development, especially as related to the proposed expansions of the 2025 Fresno General Plan into the North and Southeast Growth Areas (Exhibit 1).
- B-1-h. Policy:** Seek amendment of the MOU to require City review and approval of any county development entitlements (including site plan review, parcel map, and director review and approval applications) proposed within the City's sphere of influence.
- B-1-l. Policy:** In conjunction with the Counties of Madera and Fresno, the State of California, the federal government, and other interested agencies, support the San Joaquin River Parkway Plan as adopted by the San Joaquin River Conservancy.
- B-2-a. Policy:** Cooperate with Fresno County, Madera County, the City of Clovis and other cities and special districts to:
- ?? optimize resource management (water, air, agricultural land, etc.).
  - ?? develop a regional justice system program to meet future needs of the justice system, both adult and juvenile, including the courts, probation, and sheriff.
  - ?? develop a regional public health program to meet future needs including community, environmental and mental health services.
  - ?? develop a regional program to meet future library, recreational and social service needs.

?? develop a multi-jurisdictional impact analysis and financial plan to ensure that significant changes in the level of services provided by one agency does not adversely impact another local agency.

**B-2-b. Policy:** Cooperate with Fresno County, Madera County, the City of Clovis, other cities and special districts to develop a regional approach to economic development which:

?? achieves jobs/housing balance where the number of job opportunities match the availability and cost of housing.

?? identifies regional economic development programs designed to create jobs and provide cost-effective incentives to assist business development of regional significance.

?? promotes an agricultural-industrial synergy that will enable all agricultural products to be fully prepared and processed locally.

**B-2-c. Policy:** Eliminate duplication and promote cost-efficiency in the provision of public services by annexation of unincorporated county islands within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence.

**B-3-a. Policy:** Coordinate planning and development project reviews with relevant agencies or special districts to ensure consistency with Fresno General Plan policies and programs.

TABLE III-2: POLICIES PROPOSED IN THE 2025 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN TO ENHANCE AND REVITALIZE ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS

<b>C-5-a. Policy:</b>	Support and implement the A Fresno Vision 2010 Downtown Master Plan as proposed by the mayor's Downtown Implementation Team (DIT) and the recommendations of the associated Research, Review and Recommendation Committee (3RC) delineated in the 3RC advisory report of September 21, 2001.
<b>C-5-b. Policy:</b>	Implement the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures identified in the 1989 Central Area Plan including the Urban Design Plan.
<b>C-5-c. Policy:</b>	Maintain the pre-eminence of Fresno's Central Area as the San Joaquin Valley's "Regional Capital" by locating major governmental facilities and business headquarters in this area.
<b>C-5-d. Policy:</b>	Recognize and promote the diversity of functional districts and unique physical features within the Central Area.
<b>C-5-e. Policy:</b>	Provide and maintain an urban image which creates a "sense of place" for Fresno's Central Area and promotes a greater concentration of buildings and people.
<b>C-5-f. Policy:</b>	Design and develop focal points and gathering places for public life. Create and maintain a variety of small human scale plazas and mall areas as people-oriented spaces integrated with compatible businesses and services.
<b>C-5-g. Policy:</b>	Preserve, promote, procure and strategically locate landmarks, monuments and artwork that provide orientation and represent Fresno's cultural heritage and artistic values.
<b>C-5-h. Policy:</b>	Develop and promote Central Area signage as "graphic art" to provide artistic and aesthetic vistas for pedestrians and motorists.
<b>C-5-i. Policy:</b>	Construct, enhance, and maintain public buildings and spaces that serve as models of exemplary urban design.
<b>C-5-j. Policy:</b>	Promote a balanced system of recreation facilities and landscaped open space areas to meet the passive and active needs of Central Area employees, visitors and residents.
<b>C-7-b. Policy:</b>	Revitalize declining neighborhoods within adopted redevelopment plan areas.
<b>C-7-c. Policy:</b>	Support the newly initiated proactive code enforcement and nuisance abatement program of the Housing, Economic and Community Development Department in its efforts to improve the attractiveness of existing and older residential neighborhoods.

- C-7-d. Policy:** Monitor the newly strengthened and expanded housing and zoning code enforcement program in its efforts to help stabilize older neighborhoods.
- C-7-e. Policy:** Develop and provide public services maintenance, and capital improvement projects for older neighborhoods as funding is available.
- C-7-g. Policy:** Develop resources and incentives including allowance of greater building design flexibility in target neighborhoods in order to encourage and focus private redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts.
- C-7-h. Policy:** Continue to implement a streamlined review process for private redevelopment of older neighborhoods.
- C-7-i. Policy:** Continue to utilize incentives (such as express permit processing/fast-tracking, subsidized or deferred development fees, and improvement districts) to stimulate rehabilitation of existing structures and construction of new dwellings in established areas, to be compatible with existing and planned neighborhood characteristics.
- C-7-j. Policy:** Continue to pursue a rezoning implementation program which ensures that all vacant or single-family residential developed parcels (that are planned for low, medium-low, or medium density residential use) are also rezoned consistent with the planned use.
- C-7-k. Policy:** Encourage the recycling of older buildings to meet the City's changing housing needs.
- C-7-l. Policy:** Actively solicit the participation of community groups and organizations (such as Tree Fresno, service clubs, and philanthropic institutions) to contribute resources and expertise in a concerted effort to improve and maintain established neighborhoods.

TABLE III-3: POLICIES IN THE 2025 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN TO ACCOMMODATE HIGHER INTENSITY AND MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS

- C-3-a. Policy:** Through the specific plan, establish guidelines and performance standards for the following:
- ?? the adequate provision of a comprehensive range of urban services.
  - ?? locations for development of nodes or pedestrian pockets, using mid-rise and high-rise structures to accommodate 5,000 to 15,000 residents and employment centers.
  - ?? the protection of surrounding uses and improvements from detrimental impacts such as:
    - traffic noise and vehicle emissions.
    - visual intrusion.
    - interruption of view and air movement.
    - encroachment upon solar access.
- C-3-b. Policy:** Conduct a comprehensive update of the zoning ordinance to facilitate the implementation of intensity corridors. These zoning ordinance amendments should address mixed uses, expedited administrative zoning procedures, shared parking, underground and multi-story parking structures incorporated into buildings, transit facilities, open space, and aesthetic considerations.
- C-3-c. Policy:** Buildings in excess of 60 feet in height shall only be allowed within the boundaries of the adopted Freeway 41 Mid-Rise/High-Rise Corridor, as depicted on the Urban Form Components Map (Exhibit 6). For properties zoned and planned for industrial uses, which are outside the adopted Freeway 41 corridor, the Planning and Development Director may permit building heights in excess of 60 feet.
- C-4-a. Policy:** Strategically locate areas appropriate for more intensive concentrations of urban uses.
- C-4-b. Policy:** Activity centers should include commercial areas, employment centers, schools, higher-density residential development, churches, parks, and other gathering points where residents may interact, work, and obtain goods and services in the same place.
- C-4-c. Policy:** Place emphasis on pedestrian activities and linkages, and provide for priority transit routes and facilities to serve the activity centers.
- C-4-d. Policy:** Activity centers should provide for mixed uses and shared parking facilities, including multi-story and underground parking facilities.
- C-8-b. Policy:** Utilize the model ordinances contained in the A Livable Neighborhood Development implementation guideline of October 2001 (prepared by the Growth Alternatives Alliance for AA Landscape of Choice) for guidance in preparation of zoning regulations proposing mixing of residential with nonresidential land uses.

- C-8-c. Policy:** Create an appropriate environment for the inclusion in mixed-use development of higher density single-family residential dwellings, senior housing, a small open space, and community facilities.
- C-8-d. Policy:** Ensure land use compatibility between mixed-use districts in activity centers and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- C-8-g. Policy:** Support the planning and development of master planned/mixed use communities such as the Dominion Project.